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Media Release

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Seasonally adjusted employment increased by 111,000 people (0.9 per cent) between July and August as hours worked rose 0.1 per cent, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Employment and hours worked

Bjorn Jarvis, head of Labour Statistics at the ABS, said: "Employment rose almost 1 per cent but hours worked rose by a more modest 0.1 per cent. Hours fell by 4.8 per cent in Victoria, compared to a 1.8 per cent increase across the rest of Australia."

"The weaker increase in hours worked has also been reflected in the strength of the increase in part-time employment between May and August, which has been almost eight times greater than the increase in full-time employment."

Employment growth was stronger for females (67,000 people or 1.1 per cent) than males (44,000 or 0.7 per cent). Hours worked also increased for females (0.2 per cent), with no change for males, and remained around 4.7 per cent and 5.9 per cent below March respectively.

In original terms most of the employment growth in August was people employed as non-employees (mainly owner managers of enterprises without employees), with the number of employees remaining relatively similar to July.

Unemployment and participation

"The large increase in seasonally adjusted employment coincided with a large decrease in unemployment of 87,000 people, around 55,000 of whom were females," Mr Jarvis said.

However, the large changes in employment and unemployment did not coincide with a large increase in participation, with the participation rate increasing by just 0.1 percentage points. It remained 1.1 percentage points below March (when it was 65.9 per cent).

"With participation relatively unchanged, the increase in employment and decrease in unemployment saw the unemployment rate decrease 0.7 percentage points to 6.8 per cent," Mr Jarvis said.

Underutilisation

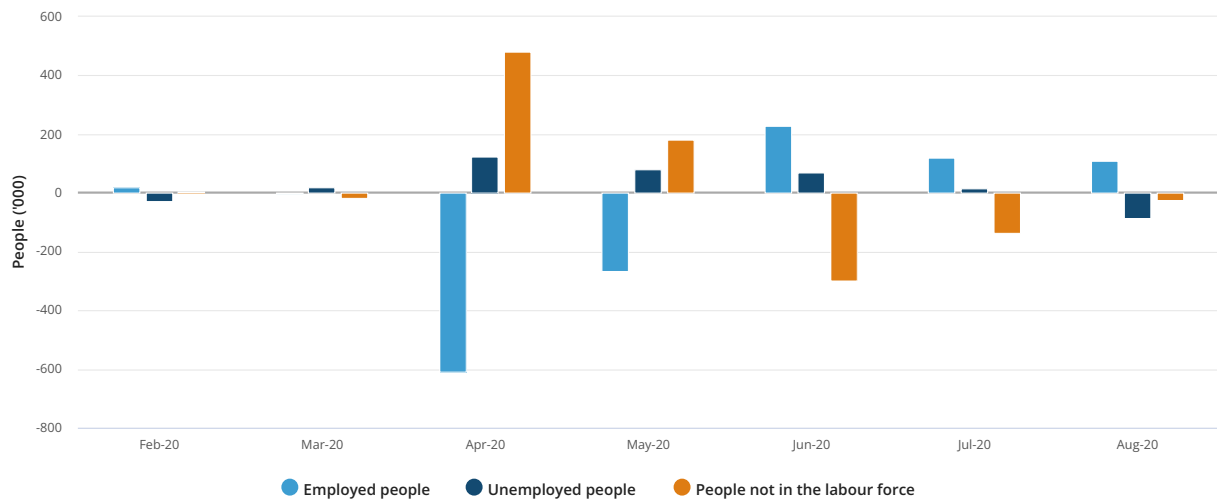
The underemployment rate remained at 11.2 per cent, 2.4 percentage points above March.

The underutilisation rate, which combines the unemployment and underemployment rates, fell 0.7 percentage points to 18.0 per cent, but remained 4.7 percentage points higher than March.

Victoria

"The August data provides insights into the labour market impacts from the Stage 4 restrictions in Victoria. In addition to the large fall in hours worked, employment in Victoria also decreased by 42,400 people and the unemployment rate increased to 7.1 per cent." Mr Jarvis said.

Monthly changes in key labour force populations, Australia



Today's release includes additional analysis of hours worked, including for those people working zero hours, analysis of employment and hours for the states and territories, and analysis of employment changes for employees and non-employees. It also contains comparisons with US and Canadian data.

More details are in the August 2020 issue of Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0). Further information, including regional labour market information, will be available in the upcoming August 2020 issue of Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001), due for release on 24 September 2020.

The ABS would like to thank Australians for their continued support in responding to our surveys during such a difficult time.

Media notes

- People in the Labour Force are either employed, or unemployed. In order to be

unemployed, people must be actively looking for work, and available to start work during the reference week.

- The ABS has suspended publishing trend series for the COVID-19 period.
- Further information on additional labour market statistics can be found in 'Measuring the labour market impacts of COVID-19'; part of the suite of information available on the ABS website.
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